



JEWS, ARABS *and* ZIONISM

THE MANNER in which the United States is involved in the problems of the Middle East was strikingly illustrated, during the weeks immediately preceding the 1954 Congressional elections, by the fact that many candidates for American political office found it necessary to take a stand on the question of arms shipments to the Arab states.

In the midst of this situation were the Zionists, partisans for Israel, arguing against plans to ship arms to specified Arab states before those states concluded a final peace settlement with Israel. Opposing them were those who support the present policies by which the Administration believes that it may rebuild

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badly damaged American prestige and Western defenses in the strategically vital Middle East through a policy of impartiality toward all the states of that area.

This latest manifestation of American involvement in the Middle East requires some clear definitions of the terms usually employed to discuss it. A *Jew*, for example, may be a member of almost any race and Jews are nationals of most of the civilized states of the world. *Arabs* are Muslims, Christians, non-believ-

ers or even — if you consider many North Africans — Jews. The Arabs, too, are citizens of many nations. *Zionists* may be Jews, Christians, non-believers or, conceivably but not probably, Muslims.

If these descriptions evoke surprise, it is because it is not generally recognized that these terms are all in different categories. *Judaism*, for example, is a religion. *Zionism* is a political-national movement supported by some Jews and some who are not Jews in many countries of the world. *Arab* — the most difficult to define — is generally accepted to mean an ethnic group, determined largely on the basis of language. In the general debate about that part of the Middle East problem related directly to Israel and the Arab states, these several classifications have been all too commonly ignored. The resultant confusion has contributed generously to the tension.

One of the first steps Americans might take toward a better understanding of the Middle East and therefore toward eventual peace in the area, would be to understand the distinctions between Zionists, Jews and Israelis.

SINCE Judaism, like Christianity or Islam, is a universal religion, Jews are people who profess Judaism, regardless of their race or nationality. Although “Israel” historically has been a *theological* term to describe the religious fellowship of

Judaism, the existence of a sovereign nation of that name suggests that, in the interests of accuracy and precision, the term be used now to refer exclusively to the Middle Eastern state established in 1948.

An Israeli is a citizen of the State of Israel. An Israeli may be a Jew, a Christian, a Muslim, or a non-believer.

Zionism is a worldwide political movement. Not all Jews are Zionists nor are all Zionists Jews. American Jews are individual Americans and part of the American community. Their only homeland is the United States of America. Such terms as “the Jewish homeland” (meaning the State of Israel), etc. are misnomers.

About 12 years ago, a group of Jews who opposed the identification of Zionism (a politico-national movement) with Judaism (a religion), believing that it would be injurious to the character of their Judaism, organized the American Council for Judaism. One of its principal purposes was to articulate the viewpoint of those American Jews who oppose the Zionist program and who wish their dissociation to be made clear to all the American people. An oversimplified description of the organization would label it as anti-Zionist.

We in the Council are aware that many people, both those who regard themselves as Jews and those who do not, will classify one as a Jew merely because one is descended by birth from Jews. This is a sociologi-

cal fact. The American Council for Judaism, however, defines Judaism as a religion and holds that what makes one a Jew is adherence to that religion and identification with the fellowship connected with it.

Zionism is a nationalist movement which sought and achieved its political objective of a Zionist State — Israel — in a part of Palestine. Zionists speak of this as a “Jewish” state and seek to endow all Jews, regardless of their nationality, with a special relationship to it. The Council rejects any idea that Jews are a “nation” or that they have any special relation to the State of Israel.

We believe that Israel is, or should be, a nation in the Middle East, having sovereign power over its own citizens but having no claims whatever upon individuals outside its borders.

THE COUNCIL’S view of this matter was confirmed, in April of 1954, by Henry A. Byroade, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs, who declared:

“To the Israelis I say that you should come to truly look upon yourselves as a Middle Eastern State — and see your own future in that context, rather than as a headquarters — or nucleus, so to speak — of world-wide groupings of people of a particular religious faith who must have special rights within and obligations to the Israeli State.”

Dr. Emanuel Newmann, veteran

American Zionist leader, described this definition of Israel as “the antithesis of Zionism.” The basic concept of Zionism may be described as that of “Jewish” nationalism — a theory advanced by the six characteristic claims of nationalistic movements: common ancestry, common political interests, common national territory, common culture, common language and a common national religion. Zionism claims that all Jews possess these characteristics of a nationality. Mr. Byroade’s definition epitomizes the difference between Zionism and those Jews who reject the basic Zionist concept.

The relationship of America’s Middle East problems to these fundamentals has also been implied — if not stated explicitly — by officials of our Department of State. Secretary Dulles in a report to the nation on his trip to the Middle East, on June 1, 1953, said: “Today the Arab peoples are afraid that the United States will back the new State of Israel in aggressive expansion. They are more fearful of Zionism than of Communism, and they fear lest the United States become the backer of expansionist Zionism.”

Mr. Dulles’ view was further interpreted by Mr. Byroade who, in a speech before the American Council for Judaism on May 1, 1954, declared that “the quarrel which divides the Arab States and Israel is not basically religious. It is essentially a nationalistic quarrel such as could arise with equal bitterness be-

tween two other peoples whose national aspirations clashed.”

It is important to realize that in both statements Zionism, as such, is one of the major factors causing difficulties in the Middle East for it is Zionism that seeks to combine Judaism — a religion — with Israeli *national* problems. All Americans can help to ease the tensions of the area if they become fully aware of the distinction between Zionism and Judaism and if they regard Israel as a state having jurisdiction only over its own citizens with no special national attachments or associations for Jews who are citizens of other nations.

The Council's view of these matters is not a creation of its own. On the contrary, its interpretation is an ancient one and is in the direct line of the development of Judaism in the United States since Colonial times. Unquestionably there are other interpretations and other definitions, but the members of the Council have selected the views, interpretations and definitions that seem true to them, and have joined together to promote what they believe will be the development of Judaism in America and the attitude of American Jews.

JEWES were never a race. In millenia before our own they may have been. In lands other than the United States they may still choose to be something more or less than, or different from, the adherents of a

religion: a nation, a cultural minority or an ethnic group.

We, in the United States, in the twentieth century, accept none of these other identifications of either Judaism or Jews.

Zionists have every right to express their views — as long as they make it clear that they speak only for Zionists and not for all Jews. All too often they do not make this clear and, in many instances they have actually attempted to speak for all Jews. Their pre-election campaign dealing with the question of American arms shipments to the Middle East is a case in point. In endeavoring to clarify this situation to the candidates for office, the Council frequently referred to a letter to Mr. Byroade, written on January 26, 1954, in which I pointed out:

The question of military assistance to foreign states, in the Middle East or any other area of the world, is one of high diplomacy and complex technical knowledge. We seriously question that certain leaders of Jewish organizations who have presumed to advise on this question of United States military assistance for Middle Eastern states have the competence to formulate a decision in terms of the full complexity of American responsibilities in the area. It is a certainty that the memberships of most of the organizations for which these leaders presume to speak were not assembled on the basis of expertness in Middle East politics.

In its long history, Judaism has

given birth to various and sometimes inconsistent ideals and aspirations. One may find them all in Jewish literature. One must select and choose. Those that are consistent with the nature of life in America, we think, should be intensified; the others should be dropped. Fortunately, the noblest in Judaism and therefore in the history of Jews can be welded without a seam to the noblest American tradition.

But the welding of the two traditions can come only if the Jew considers himself as an individual, integrated into an American society founded upon individual rights and responsibilities, seeking no special privileges or immunities, asking no

special status or favors for the individual Jew or for any Jewish group.

The American Council for Judaism opposes all ideologies and organizations, be they Jewish or otherwise conceived and promoted, that regard Jews as an identifiable secular minority. For those of us in the Council, it is precisely because we seek an *American Judaism*, a Judaism thoroughly integrated into the American scene, that we are compelled to oppose Zionism. Zionism leads to a secular separation as the end result of its basic principle that Jews are a nation. By these teachings, Zionism, in our belief, will destroy the essentials of Judaism as a universal, world religion.



Exactly As Ordered

THE JAPANESE are acknowledged among races to be the world's cleverest imitators, but during the Korean conflict one U. S. Air Force commander was considerably provoked by this characteristic. The incident which brought this about occurred when a nervous pilot cracked a landing gear forging on a small but badly needed reconnaissance plane.

The officer, knowing that it might take months to obtain the necessary part from the States, called in a Jap mechanic.

"I want a part exactly like this one — quick," the commander said. "Can you make one?"

The mechanic, after studying the part, nodded gravely and then departed with the forging under his arm. In less than a week he was back at the hangar with the duplicate part, an exact copy of the original, including the inspection stamp impression.

The officer was elated until he took a second look at the forging — and then he was fit to be tied. The zealous workman had carefully, and with extreme accuracy, reproduced the crack in the duplicate part that had made the original part useless.